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HOW DO I GET
STARTED?

WHAT COULD I DO?

HOW FAR HAVE
WE COME?

WHY GO?

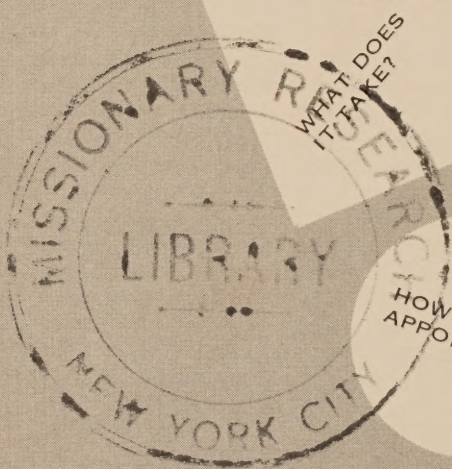
WHO WILL HELP?

WHAT'S AHEAD?

you-

a missionary?

By Elmer S. West, Jr.



WHAT DOES
IT TAKE?

HOW DO I GET
APPOINTED?

INVESTIGATING
THE OPPORTUNITIES AND REQUIREMENTS
FOR
MISSIONARY SERVICE OVERSEAS

HOW FAR HAVE WE COME?

Southern Baptists have made a significant beginning along the high road of advance in the appointment of missionaries. During the past six years, from 1948 through 1953, 462 missionaries have been appointed, bringing the total to 906. Increasing numbers of young people are earnestly seeking God's leadership in world mission service. There are more than 400 mission volunteers in our seminaries and approximately 1200 others, most of whom are in high school or college. Prospects are bright for a steady stream of new missionaries in the years immediately ahead to push out the frontiers of Christ's Kingdom around the world. The personnel department is eager to work with each individual who feels that God may be calling him to serve overseas. Pastors can be of tremendous help to the cause of missions by encouraging young persons interested in possible mission service to write to the personnel department of the Foreign Mission Board.

WHY GO?

Many young people are asking themselves seriously why they should give up all the blessings and advantages of home to go to an unknown country with the message of Christ when there is so much sin all around us. But as they learn of the unbelievable destitution of millions of lost people, they are jarred out of their complacency. Then, as they come to realize that for every Southern Baptist missionary in the thirty-two countries where we have work there are at least forty specialized Christian workers serving Christ full-time in the twenty-two states of our Convention, the challenge of a woefully unbalanced witness for Christ burns itself into their hearts. They know that they must face up honestly to the strong possibility that God may want them to serve Him out there where the laborers are so few. Out of this background of experience, through earnest prayer and realistic dedication, God may lead one to the unmistakable conviction, "God wants me on the mission field and I must do everything in my power to test His leadership and follow His will."

WHAT COULD I DO?

Every young person who answers God's call to go to the mission field does so primarily in

order that he might share the "good news" of Jesus Christ with those who do not know it. Evangelism is carried through these four channels:

1. GENERAL FIELD WORK

Both couples and single missionaries have wonderful opportunities for witness and service in doing general field work. This includes evangelistic preaching by the men, as well as the strengthening of the believers that they in turn may render more effective service. Helping to organize new churches and teaching Bible study classes lead young Christians to increased knowledge and faith in their new-found Saviour. One missionary may have the responsibility for working with twenty or thirty separate groups of believers to help them grow in power and witness.

Missionary wives and single women render a special service through working with the women and children to win them to Christ and to help them learn more about Him. Single women have opportunities for working in good will centers, teaching Bible classes, conducting classes in music, and visiting in the homes.

2. TEACHING

Those who serve as teachers make an incalculable contribution to the cause of Christ. Through the teaching that is being done at various levels from elementary school to Bible school and seminary, the young national is being trained to take his place of leadership among his people as a faithful witness to the truth of Christ which makes men free. Only in this way can strong, indigenous churches be built. After all, this is the only real hope for the evangelization of any country. Many of the single women appointed are connected with some phase of this educational process, teaching at all levels from primary through high school. The men serve primarily in Bible schools and seminaries, although a few teach in high schools or colleges. Those who teach, likewise, have many opportunities for preaching and working with the churches.

3. MEDICAL SERVICE

The ministry of healing is one of the most powerful media through which the Christian testimony is given. Helping to heal a diseased body oftentimes opens wide the door of opportunity to help Christ heal a "sin-sick soul." For instance, in a country like Indonesia where there is only one doctor for every 60,000 people, the need for medical missionaries is indescribable. There is always an overwhelming need for nurses. The work of the physicians abroad is greatly limited unless they have the assistance of well trained nurses.

4. THE MISSIONARY HOME

Not enough has been said about the strong witness for Christ which is borne by the Christian home of the missionary as it steadily makes its contrasting influence felt in a non-Christian community. This avenue of helpfulness should never be under-estimated when consideration is being given to God's leadership for foreign service. The home where there is love, joy, and a healthy attitude because Christ is its center will in the warmth of its concern and hospitality provide a genuine means of evangelism. The missionary wife, though she will seek increasingly other areas of service as the children grow older, will find that her home provides the best example of what Christ can do for individuals and the family to which they belong.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

God's call to overseas service today is a call to become the very best equipped person possible in (1) educational preparation, (2) practical experience, (3) physical health, (4) emotional stability, and (5) genuine consecration to Christ. The missionary appointee must be within the age limits of twenty-four and thirty-two years.

1. EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION

Every missionary needs a degree from an accredited senior college. The mission volunteer is encouraged to take a wide selection of courses while in college, since he will get the specialized training in Bible and religious education in seminary. Thorough mastery of English is important, as is the ability to learn another language. It is strongly recommended that wherever possible the missionary volunteer gain a basic skill in typing, a knowledge of simple bookkeeping, some elementary training in music, and the fundamentals of first aid.

a. GENERAL FIELD WORKER—For the man, in addition to a degree from an accredited senior college, a Bachelor of Divinity degree from a Southern Baptist seminary is required. For the woman, along with the degree from senior college, the minimum requirement is the Master of Religious Education degree.

b. TEACHER—For the man, the requirements are the same as in (a). In addition, if at all possible, he should have work toward his doctor's degree in theol-

ogy, if he expects to teach in a Bible school or seminary. For the woman, the basic requirements are the same as in (a). Graduate work in the chosen field would be helpful.

c. MEDICAL SERVICE—The doctor, in addition to his college work and his M.D. degree, must have at least one year of internship, one year of residency and one year in seminary if possible. The nurse must have her regular college degree and nurse's training, or the B.S. degree in Nursing. In addition, the nurse should have one year in a seminary or training school.

d. THE MISSIONARY WIFE—It is to be hoped that a missionary wife might be as well trained, educationally, as the single woman missionary. However, the minimum requirement for the missionary wife is two years beyond high school either in college or seminary. The wife is appointed as a missionary in her own right with such responsibilities as have already been mentioned.

2. PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Just as the medical doctor is required to have two years of practical experience beyond graduation, so those who go as teachers or general field workers are required to have at least the equivalent of two years of practical experience. In the case of the man, this is taken to mean experience as a pastor. In the case of the woman, it may mean work in a church, a good will center, or public school teaching. Our Board is convinced that there is no substitute for practical experience. The exact length of such service must be worked out with the personnel department on an individual basis.

3. PHYSICAL HEALTH

If a person is to serve Christ effectively overseas, he must have above average health. This means that one's health must be guarded and protected through years of training. If there has been any serious health problem, the personnel department should be notified so that proper medical advice can be sought.

4. EMOTIONAL STABILITY

Unless a person has a healthy control of his emotions, he, more than likely, will not be able to give his best service on a foreign field. He must be able to work very closely with people

and get along with them, although there may be decided differences of opinion and personality. He must have a sense of inner security which will see him through hard and discouraging situations. He must learn how to live in the midst of tension and uncertainty. He must be pliable enough to adjust to loneliness, hardship, strange customs, language and environment, away from family, friends, and homeland. These adjustments must be made on a lifetime basis.

5. CONSECRATION TO CHRIST

Underlying all that has been said about these requirements for missionary service, there must be a personal experience of salvation in Jesus Christ. Added to this must be the inescapable conviction that God is leading to special service on a foreign field. These go together to create an absorbing concern for the sharing of the gospel with those who have never heard. Unless a person has these three ingredients welded together by a realistic dedication to Christ in a vital devotional life, then, whatever else his qualifications may be he is not the one to go as an ambassador of God to another country.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

The initial step for any person to take who feels that God may be leading him to foreign mission service is to write to the Department of Missionary Personnel, Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Box 5148, Richmond, Virginia. No matter how young the volunteer may be, he is encouraged to take this step. A student in high school or college will be sent a mission volunteer card to fill out, and after the writing of a life sketch, he will be eligible to receive a free subscription to THE COMMISSION. Volunteers who are beyond college will be started in a directed fashion along the procedure toward appointment, which will be explained in detail at that time. Pastors are encouraged to counsel with and help the volunteer in any way. Even those young people who are searching for God's leadership in the choice of a vocation are encouraged to write for information. It is necessary that the volunteer take the initiative at all times in corresponding with the personnel department. This is done so that all action will be taken under the leadership of God and not as a result of prodding from the personnel department. Volunteers are urged to keep in touch with the Board by writing once or twice a year while in high school and college.

HOW DO I GET APPOINTED?

Once or twice each year the secretaries of the personnel department visit each of the seminaries and some medical schools to interview missionary candidates. Within six months after the initial contact in seminary or graduate school, the candidate is expected to submit a full autobiography written according to an outline provided by the personnel department. About eighteen months before a candidate plans to seek appointment, information forms are filled out and reference material is obtained. Following this by some six weeks, the formal application for appointment is requested by the candidate. This form gives the candidate an opportunity to share his experience of conversion and call to foreign mission service, as well as his doctrinal belief. After this form is received, physical and psychiatric examinations are authorized. Then the Personnel Committee of the Board makes a study of all the information which has been received on the candidate, and a tentative decision concerning possible appointment is given several months before the date of anticipated appointment. (Under no circumstances can a candidate be considered for appointment within less than eight months after he has submitted his autobiography.)

At the designated time, by invitation of the committee, the candidate comes to Richmond to seek appointment. At this time, the members of the Board question the candidate concerning his Christian experience and doctrinal beliefs, in order to be assured that he will present the distinctive message of Southern Baptists. The experience of being approved by the Foreign Mission Board for missionary service, in many instances, is the climax of years of preparation for overseas service. This is a high spiritual experience for the new appointee and for all who are present.

WHO WILL HELP?

The person appointed by the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention enters into one of the most rewarding relationships that could be imagined. He is a member of a great and growing missionary family, and the fellowship and sense of unity in dedication and service is a constant source of strength. He is a representative of a far larger group of some eight million Southern Baptists. He becomes increasingly conscious of their dependable financial support, which is becoming

more adequate year by year, through the Co-operative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Even more valuable is the spiritual undergirding afforded by deep concern and faithful prayers for him, his loved ones and his high calling. No, a Baptist missionary is not alone. God is always there, to strengthen and guide, and there are multitudes of faithful co-laborers who have strong arms and sturdy hearts to help bear the load.

WHAT'S AHEAD?

God has great joy in store for those who will undertake to follow His leadership in advancing through the open door of opportunity. There are always urgent calls from the field for all types of missionaries discussed here. The question asked so often, "Do you have more money than mission volunteers or more young people wanting appointment than you can send?" has a two-fold answer. There are neither enough qualified candidates nor as much money as is needed to do all the necessary work. However, Southern Baptists give increasing assurance that they will provide the money to appoint all qualified candidates. They have done this for six years of Advance. We believe they will continue to do so. Each time a new missionary is appointed, Southern Baptists are obligating themselves to spend about \$100,000 for his support and equipment during a lifetime of service.

God seeks to lead us forward to greater stewardship of self and service. Will we follow?



Published by the Department of Missionary Education and Promotion, Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, Richmond 20, Va.